UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/C.5/45/76
21 June 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-fifth session
FIFTH COMMITTEE
Agenda item 127

UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM

Note by the Secretary-General of the United Nations

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has the honour to transmit herewith to the members of the General Assembly the text of a note by the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on the subject of the United Nations common system.

Agenda item 127

Note by the Secretary-General of the
International Telecommunication Union

GRANTING OF SPECIAL POST ALLOWANCES IN THE ITU

Background

Following the instructions of the ITU's Nice Plenipotentiary Conference held in 1989, the Administrative Council of the ITU has created a special committee called the High Level Committee composed of representatives of 21 Member States to review the structure and the functioning of the Union. As a conclusion of its work, the High Level Committee formulated approximately one hundred recommendations, 22 of them relating to the financial and personnel management and information technology.

The Administrative Council, at its 46th Session, which ended earlier this month, has endorsed those of the recommendations falling within its competence and has called for the convening of an Additional Plenipotentiary Conference to consider the others. It is now to the Secretary-General of the ITU to implement those of the recommendations already approved.

Proposal by the ITU Administrative Council

During that Session a special Ad hoc Group of the Council was created to study more in depth personnel matters. As a result of its work this special group suggested that the Secretary-General should involve very deeply the ITU staff members at the Professional and Directorial level in the implementation of the approved recommendations, by requesting them to study, with regard to their working environment, the best possible measures of implementation. Such an additional temporary work will be compensated, after certification, with a special, non-pensionable, post allowance in accordance with the ITU Staff Regulations and Rules.

Although it was recognized unanimously by the Administrative Council that this matter was exclusively within the prerogatives and authority of the Secretary-General the latter made it very clear that he would not introduce the proposed measures if the Administrative Council instructed him not to do so; this has not been the case.

Action by the ITU Secretary-General

The details of the Secretary-General's action can be found in his memorandum addressed on 21 June 1991 to the concerned staff members entrusting them with this additional temporary work. It is to be noted that the granting of any special post allowance is subject to certification by the supervisors of the work performed and that at this point in time no exact assessment of the number of allowances which will be granted can be made (see Annex).

With regard to the above action, the ITU Secretary-General considers it as not being in contradiction with the relevant Article of the 1947 Agreement between the United Nations and the ITU. That Article reads as follows

"ARTICLE VIII

Personnel Arrangements

1. The United Nations and the Union agree to develop as far as practicable common personnel standards, methods and arrangements designed to avoid serious discrepancies in terms and conditions of employment, to avoid competition in recruitment of personnel, and to facilitate any mutually desirable interchange of personnel in order to obtain the maximum benefit from their services.

2. The United Nations and the Union agree to co-operate to the fullest extent possible in achieving these ends." (emphasis added).

The above underlined parts of the respective provisions of Article 8 indicate clearly that a certain flexibility of action in personnel matters is left to both Organizations concerned.

Furthermore, it is to be noted that the action by the ITU Secretary-General is also in line with the concept of the common system itself, which does not require to be applied in a strictly identical manner by each and every organization forming part of the system, thus leaving no flexibility for exceptional measures to be taken in order to solve the organization's specific problems, in particular when such measures are of a temporary nature. This has been recognized, at an early stage, by the UNGA itself when it adopted Document A/3209, containing the Salary Review Committee Report, paragraph 15 of which reads as follows :

"The Common System should be retained by those organizations now using it. It need not be applied with such rigid uniformity that an organization can never deviate from it, even if there is no other solution to its own particular staffing problems".

Conclusion

The ITU is facing an exceptional situation, in having to implement fundamental changes in its structure and its functioning resulting from the decisions taken by its supreme organ, the 1989 Nice Plenipotentiary Conference.

Therefore, exceptional temporary measures had to be taken by the Secretary-General, in order to respond efficiently to that exceptional situation. Such measures do, in the Secretary-General's view, not run counter the common system, to which the ITU confirms its attachment.

20.06.91

ANNEX

MEMORANDUM

Date: 21.06.91

To: To all Headquarters Staff Members at P.and D.levels under contract on 1 July 1991

From: Pekka TARJANNE, Secretary-General

Subject: Implementation of the High Level Committee Recommendations

---

1. You have all received a copy of the Report "Tomorrow's ITU : The challenges of change" prepared by the High Level Committee to review the structure and functioning of the ITU and of the Report on the Analysis of HLC Consultants' Recommendation (Document 7124 CA-46).

2. As you might be aware the Administrative Council has studied this report in depth and, in deciding to endorse those HLC Recommendations listed in Annex 1,* has arrived at a certain number of conclusions which it transmits to the Secretary-General and the Coordination Committee for implementation.

3. While many of these recommendations can be put into effect without major further studies, some of them require extensive analysis before any implementation mechanism can be designed and decided upon.

4. Among latter category, I would mention in particular some of the recommendations emanating from the Booz, Allen and Hamilton consultants, namely :

Recommendation 70 : "decentralized preparation and submission by Director of a cost-based Sector budget which complies with budget guidelines issued by the Secretary-General".

Recommendation 72 : "flexibility for each Bureau and the General Secretariat to reallocate funds within its budget, and responsibility to control expenditure, except that funds budgeted for non personnel expenditures could not be reprogrammed for personnel expenditures".

---

* Not reproduced in the present document.

Recommendation 74 : "changes in financial control, accounting and reporting procedures to make them consistent with the above recommendations and to provide clearer reporting on expenditures".

Recommendation 75 : "establish a "transfer pricing" policy for common services, under which common services would be funded by Bureaux on a contractor/client basis with Bureaux deciding whether to use the Common Services Department or outside vendors, with certain limits".

Implementation of the High Level Committee Recommendations

Recommendation 77 : "Establish a reformed personnel appraisal system which encourages appraisers to be constructive but also confront problems realistically."

Recommendation 78 : "Introduce the TEAM process into the ITU".

Recommendation 80 : "Establish a performance incentive programme, based on achievements of demonstrable gains in productivity, cost reduction and/or quality".

Recommendation 81 : "Recommend that the ITU begin by establishing a non-monetary awards programme to recognize high achievers, either individually or as members of a TEAM".

Recommendation 83 : "Delegate authority to the Bureau Directors and General Secretariat Department Heads to reassign staff/rearrange posts within an overall financial constraint ... ".

Recommendation 87 : "Establish a code of practice to foster more effective manager/staff communication including regular staff meetings...".

Recommendation 88 : "Enhance professional and technical training for ITU staff...".

Recommendation 91 "BAH also developed a list of eight priority applications for systems development based on user surveys, and a number of other priority technical recommendations on information systems. We endorse these proposals in principle, recognizing that costs are a factor to be considered in any implementation schedule and that some refinements or adjustments to the consultant's proposals may be necessary or desirable".

5. As a professional staff member of the Union and in view of your managerial and/or technical skills you are going to be particularly involved in the managerial changes recommended by the HLC in order to enable the Union to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

6. It is for this very reason that after consultation and with the full support of the Heads of Organs I have decided to entrust you with additional temporary duties in requesting you to study, with regard to your working environment, the best possible measures of implementation of the recommendations quoted in paragraph 4 above. To this end you will find attached some basic documentation* namely :

- the relevant parts of the BAH Report (Annex 2)
- the description of the present appraisal system (Annex 3).

7. As a first stage of this global study, I would suggest that the studies concentrate more specifically on :

- the establishment of "transfer prices" and the conditions for Bureaux selecting between the use of internal means or outside vendors,
- the introduction of the TEAM process,
- the design of tools for measuring the evolution of productivity, costs and quality,
- fostering of communications,
- the refinements or adjustments to the BAH recommendations on information systems.

Implementation of the High Level Committee Recommendations

8. The conclusion each of you may reach, taking into account your own working environment, shall be consolidated. You are thus requested to report through hierarchical channels to the Head of your Organ or Department (for the General Secretariat), who might decide, as the case may be, to assign you further work in this area, during this exercise i.e., before 31.12.1991.

9. These studies shall start by 1 July next and an interim report will be submitted to me by each Organ and Department of the General Secretariat by 31 December 1991.

10. This additional temporary work should not detract you from the accomplishment of your normal duties and shall, after certification by the Head of the Organ or Department of the General Secretariat concerned, be compensated by a Special Post Allowance in accordance with Regulation 3.8b) of the ITU Staff Regulations for the period in question. The allowances will be established in accordance with Regulation 3.8c) and their total cost shall be financed through existing budgetary provisions.

---

* Not reproduced in the present document.